The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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A TALK WITH SAINT PETER.

O Peter, wherefore didst thou doubt?
Indeed, the scud flew fast about;
But He was there whose walking foot
Could make the wandering hills take root;
And He had said, "Come down to me,"
Else had thy foot not touched the sea.
Christ did not call thee to thy grave:
Was it the boat that made thee brave?

"Easy for thee, who wast not there,
To think thou more than I couldst dare!
It hardly fits thee, though, to mock, —
Scared as thou wast that railway shock! —
Who said'st this morn, 'Wife, we must go:
The plague will soon be here, I know!'
Who, when thy child slept, — not to death, —
Said'st, 'Life is now not worth a breath!'"

Too true, great fisherman! I stand
Rebuked of waves seen from the land.
Even the lashing of the spray,
The buzzing fears of any day,
Rouse anxious doubt lest I should find
God neither in the spray nor wind;
But now and then, as once to thee,
The Master turns and looks at me.

And now to Him I turn: My Lord,
Help me to fear nor fire nor sword;
Let not the cross itself appall;
Know I not Thee, the Lord of all?
Let reeling brain nor fainting heart
Wipe out the sureness that Thou art!
Oh, deeper Thou than doubt can go,
Make my poor hope cry out "I know!"

Then, when it pleases Thee to say,
"Come to my side," some stormy way,
My feet, atoning to Thy will,
Shall, heaved and tossed, walk toward Thee still:
No leaden heart shall sink me where
Prudence is crowned with cold despair;
But I shall reach and clasp Thy hand,
And on the sea forget the land.

— *George MacDonald.*

A COMMUNION SERMON.

"*What think ye of Christ?*"— MATT. xxii. 42.

In the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety, through the months of May, June, July, August, and September, the greatest pilgrimage of modern times took place.

It was the pilgrimage of between two and three hundred thousand people to the little Tyrolese village of Oberammergau, to witness the religious drama of the "Passion Play." And they did not there see merely the human figure of Joseph Mayer, simple villager that he was, but they saw, — if they had true sight, they saw, — with the eye of the heart and soul, the revived personality of Christ, our Lord.

Therefore it was that over those vast congregations settled down at times an awe that can never be forgotten by those who beheld it; and deep murmurs of pity and sympathy often swept over that great assembly, as night winds sweep through leafless forests in November. It was the suffering of Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary, that claimed our sympathy: it was the passion of the Christ that bowed all hearts before it. And what other name, think you, in all history could

have brought those multitudes together, and exacted of them that willing homage!

O my friends, what power over human lives the cross of Christ has had! What help and comfort it has brought to men and women, when other helpers have failed and other comforts have fled! For God did reveal himself in Christ as in no other human being. It is absolutely true that men and women, losing themselves in admiration of Christ's love and heroism, find the windows of their hearts opened and the holy spirit of God coming in.

Is this all outside your range of experience? Are my words only words to you? Then you have not lived as broadly as you might, and thousands and millions of Christian lives have been built solidly on a rock which is all unknown to you. Read the long, long list of so-called "revival hymns" and "gospel songs." Call it, hastily, jargon,— doggerel, if you will,— and pass it by. But read it with a sympathetic insight, and you see that those songs are wreaths and chaplets,— some ugly, yet many beautiful, and tributes all,— laid at the feet of the Christ by men and women whose only poetry in life is this crude but touching poetry of religious phrases that are, alas! half idolatry.

But better far is such an immature composite religion than no religion, no heart religion at all. And stronger is their hold of the unseen and the eternal spirit of God than yours, my dear friend, if Jesus Christ is to you only a cold, dead, historic name.

It is the commission from Heaven that is laid upon every prophet, every religious leader, to bring to men a twofold message of "sweetness and light." From Christ himself down to Channing and Parker, with a gift in each hand, have the messengers come; but Christ alone of them all came with even hands, all the others have held their hands at unequal heights. Either they have emphasized the sweetness, (and thus tended toward sentimentality) or they have emphasized the light, and have leaned toward coldness and hardness.

"Why is it," asked Luther's wife of him, in the latter part of his life,—"why is it that, whereas your prayers were once warm and fervent, now they are cold and formal?" And the good wife did not know that brave Martin Luther was only paying the penalty which must always be paid by a man who pours all the vitality of his nature into some great protest. He must sacrifice other parts of his nature to the one part where his mission lies.

Our text asks, "What think ye of Christ?" And that is the question which I wish to put before you to-day. We may ignore the question for a time; but I fully believe that the life of Christ is woven inseparably into the tissue of history, and that the future permanence of a race or a nation is to be determined, more than we usually think, by the answer, broadly given, which it makes to this question. And your own salvation, your own survival,—if you like the phrase of Spencer better,—depends very much on your relation to Christ. For, if I read aright the nature of man, there is in us all a hunger and thirst after righteousness, an instinctive longing for God; and, taking the world as it is to-day, accepting the course of history, I affirm that the person of Jesus Christ can open the way into the presence of God as nothing else in the world can. It is he who has been chosen by Almighty God himself to bear onward the standard of a divine manhood. It is he who gathers up in himself all those ideals of truth and goodness and moral beauty which haunt us, and will not leave us, though we so often put them angrily aside. And it is he, an individual, a concrete, spiritual personality, and not abstract, general terms,— he who must win us and arouse in us his own mighty sense of God's presence and his unwearied love of man.

Now, my dear friends, you know, in the depths of your hearts, that I am right; that you have a longing for something more than theological exactness. You know that a man's theories, his views, may be sound and logical, and yet that man's heart may remain untouched, and his soul may be dying of hunger and thirst, and, whenever he thinks of God, it is as of one who is far away, hidden under the hard, inexorable laws of the physical universe. When that man looks across at some other branch of the Christian Church, it is often with a half feeling that, if only he were over there, all these mysteries would be made clear to him, and God would reveal himself more completely. But I tell you, solemnly,

that he would not. I tell you that, if you wish to come near to God, you can come through no patronage or intercession of another, but through the influence of God's spirit on your individual soul; and Christ must be your teacher, he must be the teacher of your heart, not of your head alone. Therefore make him your ideal. Put yourself in sympathy with him. Do not say, "He was not this" and "He was not that," but try to see that he did come very close to the heart of God, and also to the soul of man. Then let gratitude spring up naturally, fully, in your heart.

That is why I love and believe in this communion service, because I have found that it brings before human hearts, as no other service does, the loving, self-sacrificing, personal Christ; and, in the contemplation of his divine Sonship, they, too, gain knowledge of their kinship with God and their share in the immortal life.

How little can speculation and analysis give us of the power of Jesus of Nazareth! We grant that our knowledge of the fact of his earthly career is all too meagre; but we must look at that life as one looks at an arching rainbow: it is not a complete circle, but its beauty comes from the light of the sun, and we feel sure that, if we ourselves stood on higher ground, we would see the arch extended, and closing in a perfect circle. That circle, unseen, but believed in, is the ideal Christ, my friends. And that ideal can come to you so strongly, if you will let it, and God's spirit can work its will on your hearts through the laws of your hearts, that God himself will be revealed to you, through Jesus Christ, as in perhaps no other way. And, when we pause and consider what the ideal Christ has been to the souls of God's noblest men and women all through the last eighteen centuries, is it not strange that he is not more to you and me?

Finally, to you young people I speak,— to you who are standing on the threshold of life, revolving in your minds these problems of the Christian life,— to you I put the question, "What think ye of Christ?" You must answer that question in some way. I beg you to look deeply into it, and to let your heart as well as your intellect have part in the answer. Face your doubts boldly. Shut not your eyes to any criticism, but demand of yourselves and others what God demands, —perfect sincerity and honesty in your thinking.

Then I beg you, as you face this problem of the Christ, and try to explain this mighty force of his personality which has come down to us through the ages,— I beg you not to be driven into any position of negation and denial and religious paralysis through your reaction from any false views you may see around you. Read the records of that insidious order of the Roman Church,— the Jesuits. See what violations of the moral law and what excesses of cruelty were committed by this so-called "Society of Jesus." Shall we then be blinded by their distortion of the Master's spirit? Shall we let ourselves be blinded to the beauty and nobility which was really in him? Surely not. And surely by no other though less extreme misinterpretation of the Christ to-day should we be turned aside from a true and loyal sympathy with him. Our duty to him and to ourselves is not dependent on the duty of any other person. The inquiry comes, then, this day, to all of us, "What think ye of Christ?" Yea, in a more poetic and spiritual rendering, I say, This day is the Christ knocking at the door of our hearts. Shall we not open to him?

It is a deep truth which underlies that immortal promise in Robert Browning's "Saul":—

"He who did most shall bear most: the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for; my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead: I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee. See the Christ stand!"

—*Bradley Gilman.*

THE STILL HOUR.

"MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US."

Lord, in this awful fight with Sin
I would not just prevail;
Against each lust so strong within
I would not almost fail.
Full, gladsome, glorious victory
Should crown the Holy War.

Lord, I would triumph well,—would be
A more than conqueror.

I would not just the world o'ercome,
Prevail, then weary lie,
Nor helplessly regain my home,
Half slain by victory.
I would o'ercome and still be strong;
Would still have strength to spare,—
Yes, raise my shout thy host among,
A more than conqueror.

From sorrow's stroke I would not rise
And mournfully pass on,
Not lone my heart, not sad mine eyes,
As though my God were gone:
His pilgrim would be glad and strong
All through the Vale of Tears.
Yes, set each sorrow to a song
Meet for glad angel-ears.

Shall this divinely urgéd heart
Half toward its glory move?
What! shall I love in part, in part
Yield to the Lord of Love?
Oh, sweetest freedom, Lord, to be
Thy love's full prisoner!
Take me all captive,—make of me
A more than conqueror!

I would not just to heaven rise up,
Nor scarce to glory come.
I would not, half a stranger, droop
In the sweet heavenly home.
I would not eyes half-shut and dim
Unto the glory bring,
Nor feebly help the seraphim
The eternal song to sing.

Who would be nearer, Lord, to thee
Of all the heavenly host?
What shining one more lowlily
Would in thy light be lost?
What angel wing more swift would bear
Each message sweet of thine?
Whose palm would be more green and fair?
Whose robe more white would shine?

My joy would make more rapturous
The people of the skies;
For my poor voice more glorious
The eternal song should rise.
My heart would, with its humble glow,
Inflame their burning love.
Oh, more than conqueror below!
O gladdest saint above!

—*T. H. Gill.*

Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your faith unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.

. . . . . .

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . .

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—*Romans.*

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW-BORN CENTURY.

The twentieth century has come upon us, and we cannot enter its unknown difficulties and duties with a nobler or wiser prayer than that which Miss Cobbe has told us was given to her by Dr. Martineau:—

"O Thou Eternal, in whose appointment my life standeth, Thou hast committed to me my work; and I would commit to Thee my cares. May I wait upon Thy seasons, and leave myself to Thee. May I feel that I am not my own, and that Thou wilt heed my wants whilst I am intent upon Thy will. May I never walk anxiously, as if my path were hid, but with a mind fixed simply upon the charge intrusted to me, and desiring nothing but the dispositions of Thy providence. More and more fill me with a pity for others' trouble, which shall bring forgetfulness of my own; with the charity of them that know their own unworthiness; with the promptitude of them that dare not boast of to-morrow; and with the glad hope of the children of Eternity. Lead me in the straight path of simplicity and sanctity; and let neither the flatteries nor the censures of men draw me aside from it. And unto Thee, the Beginning and the

End, Lord of the living, and Refuge of the dying, be thanks and praise for ever. Amen."—*The Christian Life.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary, henceforth, to send a reference with the first request.

Fiction.

"Told in the Hills"; "The Broad Arrow"; "Stories by American Authors"; "A Week away from Time"; "The Phantom Future"; "The Last Days of Pompeii"; "Let us Follow Him, and Other Stories"; "The Head of Medusa"; "Short Stories of London"; "Quentin Durward"; "Frank," Miss Edgeworth; "Children of Gibeon," Besant; "The Miracle at Markham," Sheldon.

Miscellaneous.

"Thoughts that Breathe," Stanley; "Hyperion," Longfellow; "The First Book in Color"; "Through one Administration"; Woods's "Natural History"; Whately's "Rhetoric"; Wayland's "Moral Science"; Russell's "American Elocutionist"; "Three Dramas of Euripides"; "The Better Land"; "The Greatest Thing in the World," Drummond; "Addresses," Drummond; "Ugo Bassi's Sermon"; Eckermann's "Conversations with Goethe"; "German Songs and Ballads"; "The Courtship of Miles Standish, and Other Poems," Longfellow; "Enoch Arden," Tennyson; "Poems," Emerson; "The Vision of Sir Launfal, and Other Poems," Lowell; "Lalla Rookh," Moore: "Napoleon III. in Italy," Mrs. Browning; "Seaside and Fireside"; "The Playtime Naturalist"; "Life and Genius of Tintoretto."

The Wayland Branch offer the following. Apply to Mrs. Herbert Wells, Wayland, Mass. "Sunday-school Hymn, Tune, and Service Books" (6 copies); "The Carol: Songs for Sunday-school" (6 copies); the *St. Nicholas*, 1900; the *Christian Register*, 1900; the *Woman's Journal*, 1900; "Unity Service and Songs for Sunday-schools" (30 copies, published 1883); "Hymn and Tune Book," without Service (29 copies); "Book of Worship (41 copies, published 1855).

Miss Ella M. Hall, Gouverneur, N.Y., offers the *Outlook*, 1899; *Review of Reviews*, 1899; the *American Fancier* (a paper devoted to poultry).

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

As we have moved into another neighborhood, I write to request that the Cheerful Letter Club be notified of my change of post-office. It was formerly Kemp; but it is now Kaufman County, Texas. Can any one send me histories of the early times of Scotland and Ireland? I am so anxious for them, and have not been able to get any so far. Any literature that gives any information whatever concerning these countries or their long-time-ago rulers will be thankfully received. I would so much like to have pictures of early kings. Even woodcuts—if any one had them to spare—would be highly appreciated. Gratefully yours, Mrs. Kate D. Stafford, Kaufman, Kaufman County, Texas, Box 154.

I have been reading some of your books lent me by a friend, and enjoyed them very much. I am a widow with several children, all of whom enjoy reading very much; and, as our means are limited, I write to ask you to send some of your books or papers. Any good reading will be greatly appreciated. Mrs. R. A. McCabe, Nettle Ridge, Virginia, Patrick County.

Mrs. C. H. Dunlap, Greenville, West Virginia, would be glad of *Atlantic Monthly* for 1899, which contains the opening chapters of "To Have and to Hold."

I have nine children, four boys and five girls. Our school advantages are very

limited on account of not being able to send our children to school. I am anxious to give them all the education possible. Any literature will be thankfully received. I realize the great responsibility resting on mothers in the proper training of their children. Sallie E. Thomas, Eggtown, North Carolina.

Another reader of the precious little *Cheerful Letter* is introducing herself. What *would* we invalids do without some of you blessed women! How my days have been cheered since this dear "shut-in" work has touched my life! I am a wheel-chair invalid. I can't walk, or even sit up, to speak of. My reading is my *very life*. I never have half enough to keep me busy and help me to forget. I should so love to have *McClure's Magazine*. If any one will send it to me *regularly*, I will send her the *Woman's Home Companion* (or send it to some invalid whose name she may give me). I want *Scribner's Monthly* so much, too. I will "pass it on" after my reading. Mrs. J. L. Godfrey, 214 West Jefferson Street, Kirksville, Missouri.

Mrs. S. C. Duke, Polkton, North Carolina, asks for copy books, Geography, First Reader, and a Primer.

I desire reading matter of any kind, date, or condition. I like our Sunday newspapers or old copies of any entertaining reading. I am far from neighbors, and unable to find any enjoyment aside from that of reading, but am unable to purchase it for myself, and would be very thankful indeed to receive any. Mrs. May Lieser, Hartford, Wash.

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—I wish to thank you all for the nice things you sent me for our Christmas tree. We had a nice time and every child received something; and there were about sixty present, so you may all know I received a good many things. I would have been so glad to have written to every one personally, but this I could not do. I have moved two miles from any of my old neighbors and find it rather lonely, and hope my friends will not forget me. I am very anxious for the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Youth's Companion* or *St. Nicholas* regularly. I mention these as they are our favorites; but we will be glad of any reading, whether it is new or not. I pass on all I receive after we have read it. I am very anxious to read "Maggie Miller, or Old Hagar's Secret," by Mrs. Mary J. Holmes. May God bless you all in your good work, and wishing you all a Happy New Year and success in your undertakings. Mrs. J. Porter, Parkerville, Worth County, Georgia.

Mrs. J. N. Martin, Sandy Ridge, North Carolina, writes: "Will you please put my name on your list as one who needs reading for self and seven little children? I am a poor farmer's wife, and have not the means to buy books or papers. I live in an out-of-the-way place, and get very lonely at times and enjoy something to read when I get the chance. I do all my housework with the help of my little ones. I never get the chance to visit but very little. Will thank you so much for anything you will send me."

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—I have received magazines and books through *The Cheerful Letter*, which have afforded much pleasure to a number of families; and I thank the kind friends for sending them. I would like to get a commentary of the Bible or any Bible helps. They would be of much service to me in my work. Also any books for our Sunday-school library. Yours thankfully, S. C. Gardiner, Iron Bridge, Ontario, Canada.

Won't you please ask some one to send me any of the illustrated papers and magazines? I am making a scrap-book of the prominent people of this day, of their pictures also. I am making a scrap-book with just the pictures of Jesus' face. Please send any you have of him. Will some friend who takes the Northfield *Echoes* send me an occasional copy and any good papers or late magazines? Marietta Philpin, Berwyn, Indian Territory, Chickasaw Nation.

Lizzie Town, Toronto, Kansas, asks for *Happy Hour*, March, 1900; *Hearth and Home*, September, 1900; *People's Home Journal*, 1897.

Miss Della Owen, Payne Springs, Texas, is a teacher far away from the busy world, and would enjoy any reading sent her.

Mrs. J. M. Carter, Olympia, Wash., asks for "Stepping Heavenward," and "In His Steps."

Miss Hattie E. Page, Buena Vista, Virginia, will be glad of any reading.

We live four miles in the country,—my husband, two children (a boy four years, a girl one year), and myself. We sometimes find it a bit lonely, especially evenings. We are not able to buy books or subscribe for papers. Books, papers, or magazines would be highly appreciated,—"In His Steps," "David Copperfield," "Robert Elsmere," or any good reading matter. I would like anything in the way of helps in housekeeping, as I was quite a girl when married. Mrs. Lillie Rice, Highlands, North Carolina.

Now that I am shut in for the winter, would be pleased to have some good books to read. My pastor is Rev. R. T. Clarke. Am very fond of reading. If you have any of Rev. Phillips Brooks's writings, would enjoy reading them, also "Eben Holden" or "Janice Meredith,"—any good reading for an old lady. I have given me a little pickaninny, a girl eight years old. A primer or stories for children would amuse her. Mrs. D. B. Cheatwood, Salt Creek, Amherst County, Virginia.

I am very much interested in your good work, and would like to become one of your club. I am very fond of good standard reading, but am too poor to buy such as I like, and would be glad if you would send me any kind of good reading. Will some one please send me "Home Influence" and the sequel to it, "A Mother's Recompense," by Grace Aguilar. Mrs. J. L. Sale, Pleasant View, Amherst County, Virginia.

I would like books of adventure or the "Elsie Dinsmore" Series. I would be pleased to receive any kind of reading. Esther A. Still, Menahga, Minnesota.

Dear Cheerful Letter friends, one and all I wish to thank you for the papers I have received, and ask if any one has any good novels. The winter is so long and wet here, we cannot go anywhere or have much company; and I dearly love stories of all kinds, and my children like me to read to them. Thank the dear friend who sends *The Cheerful Letter* to me. Mattie Alger, Isabel, Oregon.

(It is best to mention the ages of the children, as some readers will not know them.)

Susie E. Brown, Traphill, North Carolina, asks for "United States History," "Common School Geography," and "Grammar School Arithmetic."

Mrs. Bertha Wentworth, Stark, New Hampshire, has been a shut-in nearly a year. She asks for "To Have and to Hold" and "David Harum," which she will return if some one will lend them.

I thank you for a great deal of pleasure and profit — for many of the books are very instructive — derived from the papers and books which you have so kindly sent to me. I ask a continuance of these same pleasures, as there are many things I have long wished for, but have not been able to obtain. I would like any magazine devoted to the household after it has been read. Would be very pleased to receive any of Marietta Holley's works, also something that would interest my little boy four years old. I would prefer something in the shape of natural history that would be suitable to his age. I will pass them on to others. Mrs. Guy Whitten, Clinton, Maine.

Miss Ethel Turnbull, Young Harris, Georgia, asks for Goodwin's "Greek Prose Composition," Horace and Steele's "Outline of Bible Study."

A few good books from you, dear, good *Cheerful Letter* people, have added to the pleasures of our household immensely. Now I shall be grateful to any kind friend who can send me "The Flower of the Family," "Tempest and Sunshine," and "Nellie's Memories," and other good books suitable for an elderly widow lady. Mrs. Mary Brown, Dellaplane, North Carolina.

Will any one please send any kind of recitation books suitable for intermediate school work? My pupils are in need of such books. Belle L. Allen, Dauphin, Texas.

Can any one send "Five Little Peppers, and How They Grew, and "Five Little Peppers Midway," to Miss Frances S. Rogers, 384 Marlborough Street, Boston, for a correspondent?

Mrs. Nannie Martin, Hyatt, Anson County, North Carolina, asks for a Webster's School Dictionary, two primers, and two first readers for her children.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*Contributions for this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

HONESTY AND POLITENESS.

(*Conclusion.*)

Society tolerates popinjays in the same way that it applauds the comic opera. These fools only amuse. They are the toys of the hour, and flung away when done with. But what it loves is power, and no other quality can successfully simulate it. The one unmistakable evidence of power is repose. This is so sure that he who has that gracious aspect is accused of concealing rare accomplishments under a quiet exterior. Some force there must be in the individual, or he cannot achieve a good manner. If he has no talent, he must have a belief, a great affection, anything sufficient to lift him out of personal pettiness.

Personalities are an instant admission of inferiority. For this reason a child should be taught first of all not to talk of himself. Let him know that reserve inspires respect, and that in relating family history he is doing the thing of all others he would least wish to do,— cheapening his position. But, to put it so that a child can understand, we should say that the affairs of a household are a sacred trust with its members, and that his own actions only concern an outsider at the point where they touch him. Children are not born gossips. They report what they see and hear of people only when encouraged. They would far rather talk of the cat, the birds, the flowers, and the museum, if left to their free choice. But it is essential that they know when to talk and when to be silent, and this is hardest of all. The old rule—"speak when spoken to"— has the great defect, that it kills grace. A suppressed child makes a stiff man or woman.

Much of the ungainliness of bearing which constitutes a stumbling-block to many admirable men and women is the result of an autocratic government which constrained them, as children, to be passive and inanimate in the presence of their elders. As a witty writer observes, "Their animal spirits were flat-ironed out of them." One may emerge from this discipline with an irritable bearing, which gives every expression an appearance of insistence, as if the person said to himself, "I have a right, and this time I will be heard." It is better to impress upon the child that he may speak freely whenever he has anything interesting to say to the company, but, if he finds that he is wearying others, to stop. If his fact or fancy has any value, there is some one who will like to hear it some time. Let him study to be opportune, for that is the secret of tact.

It is a pity that the majority of our young people divide into these two classes. They are either noisy or stiff. Both are signs of selfishness, the one permitted expression, the other restrained through pride. The one divine power possessed by mortals is love. Every one who has achieved any sort of influence over mankind has either been actuated by some form of love or has pretended to be. Social leaders have this for the first principle of their creed. They assume an interest in you, and courteously put themselves in the background. Who has not at some time in his life been charmed by that delicious look of interest, that cordial, welcoming touch of the hand which subtly conveyed the impression that he was of consequence in discriminating eyes? One such momentary meeting is recollected with pleasure throughout years. This may be counterfeit, but the virtue of it is that it appears real.

And real love — human brotherly feeling — is what the world wants. The fiat is that, if you have it not, you must simulate it. We are not to make our children deceitful. Their guileless hearts only need be encouraged to love. They have as a birthright the essence of the most exquisite courtesy. What they need is to be trained how to express it. Let us be sure that we ourselves know that which we essay to teach them. Some children are deliberately trained to be awkward and uncouth by being made self-conscious through incessant admonition.

Awkwardness is a social crime,— so black a crime that there is a temptation to call it a moral enormity. If to please is a virtue, then smooth motions, graceful postures, musical tones, are accomplishments to be conscientiously acquired. We are doing more for our son than his Latin tutor does when we teach him to enter and leave a room well and to sit at ease among our guests. What a wealth of learning that

girl will need to compensate for her awkwardness if she cannot open her lips without startling the nerves of the company or move over the floor without upsetting something in her path! If she had any appreciation of the beautiful harmonies under which nature conceals her most powerful operations, she would know that to be abrupt is to be weak, that uncouthness and insignificance are twins. Let us, then, teach our children smoothness; how to join one movement to another; how to lead from topic to topic; how to be graceful, gentle, and self-possessed. Develop in them the desire to please, and all the minor social virtues will the more readily follow.

Florence Hull Winterburn.

NATURAL HISTORY.

WATER SPIDERS.

It seems strange that a certain kind of spider is capable of forming a bubble, taking it down through the water, and discharging it into its nest, so that the eggs and, later on, the young are kept dry and given air. Yet this is what the water spider does.

Although this spider lives on land, where it needs plenty of air to breathe, it is really hatched under the water, and spends a great deal of its time there beneath the surface. Its body is covered with hair, which holds the air like drops of water; and, when the body is charged with these air particles, the spider dives down under the surface, forming a bubble which it holds between the hind legs and carries with it. It is only in this manner that it can furnish air for the interior of its nest, keeping it dry until the eggs are hatched.

First, of course, the mother spider builds her nest. This is placed some distance down in the water, and is a sort of cell spun in the shape of an egg, having an opening on the under side. When this is completed, she rises to the surface, and there charges her body thoroughly with air. Then once more she dives under the surface, the water forming a bubble, which gradually swells out from the body. This she skilfully holds between her furry hind legs, firmly, and yet gently, so that it won't break and escape. Swimming to the nest, she discharges the bubble in it. This, of course, crowds out some of the water, leaving the top filled with air. As the nest is large, requiring a great deal, the spider makes another and yet another trip, until the whole interior is free from moisture. By this simple process she keeps the eggs dry, and furnishes air for the young until they are large enough to swim out and get it for themselves.

But, as much as this spider lives under water, it is always dry. No matter how long it may have been swimming around under the surface, the moment it comes to the top, there is no trace of moisture in it. The reason of this is that the air particles that cling to its hair keep off the water and prevent it from soaking through the skin. Another strange thing about it is that it can swim with great speed, in spite of its balloon-like burden. The best way to watch the water spider is to place one in a vessel filled with water and containing some water plant. There it will quickly spin its web, and, if fed on flies and bugs, lead its aquatic existence.

The eggs of this spider are laid in a cocoon, shaped something like the top of a round dish. It generally contains a hundred eggs, each one of which is separated from the other. *Selected.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material for this column to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.*]

I.

Hidden Flowers.

1. The first part of the day and high honor. 2. The first two letters of a day in the week and a part of the face. 3. A girl's name and a metal.

Hidden Herbs.

1. A small coin and whatever belongs to a king. 2. A fragrant flower and a woman's name. 3. A spice and the place in which money is coined.

Hidden Fruit.

1. A tree that grows best in a sandy soil and a well-known fruit. 2. A domestic fowl and a small fruit. 3. A useless dog and a bluster.

II.

Charades.

There is a thing that nothing is,
And yet it has a name.
'T'is sometimes tall and sometimes short.
It joins our walks, it joins our sport,
And plays at every game.

I'm in every one's way, yet no one I stop,
My four hours each day
Horizontally play,
And my head is nailed on at the top.

III.

Conundrums.

1. What key is the hardest to turn? 2. What is the difference between a sailor in jail and a blind man? 3. What is larger for being cut at both ends?

Answers to Puzzles in February Number.

Pi.

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree.
It rains on the umbrellas here
And on the ships at sea.

I am composed of 27 Letters.

"Half a loaf is better than no bread."

1, 20, 15, 26, hate.
3, 23, 5, 4, loaf.
24, 13, 18, bet.
22, 2, 10, 6, nail.
9, 8, 14, fat.
18, 19, 17, 21, 11, 14, to thrust.

Arithmetical Puzzles.

1. Four cats. 2. V + I = IV.

Conundrums.

1. After T (tea). 2. Because he is full of pains.

Charade.

Advice.

THE OBER-AMMERGAU PLAY.

We are glad that we lived a little while in the neighborhood of Ober-Ammergau, and became familiar with the mountains, the woods, the waterfalls, the strange little shrines of the saints and Madonnas, the crucifixes, and the old chapels here and there along the wayside. Bavaria is a Roman Catholic country, and this ought to be remembered by those to whom the idea of any representation of Jesus Christ is offensive. Roman Catholics are accustomed to the rude carvings and wax figures, the paintings and sculptures which abound everywhere in countries where their church still exists. There must always be to the Protestant mind something offensive in these presentations,— some of them roughly executed.

I found that one misapprehension exists among those to whom the idea of the play is painful. A friend of mine said that she supposed it had been planned at the beginning of this century. It was in the *sixteenth* century that it began, not the nineteenth. The village was suffering from an epidemic, and the villagers took a vow to represent the passion of Christ every ten years. By this means (so they believe) the plague was stayed. For more than three hundred years they have been faithful to their vow.

In going to see the play performed, we do not expect — I think no one expects — that our ideal will be satisfied. We go to see an interesting survival of the Middle Ages. From the end of the nineteenth century we step into the end of the sixteenth. This alone is enough to deeply interest and thrill the foreigner, steeped as he is in such different ideas and feelings. But this is not all. The people of the place, the peasants of Ober-Ammergau, are interesting enough, even without the play, to make the journey worth taking. They have lived three hundred years under this strong religious influence. It is evident that they have been affected by it in a wonderful manner. With the simplicity of the peasant living in a remote, secluded village, they combined a serious earnest, religious, reverent spirit, which is strangely impressive. I think that this is true of all the inhabitants of the village, and must strike every one who visits Ober-Ammergau. The play is not so much a dramatic representation to them as a religious service, or, rather, the religious nature of the representation is so much to them that it is that which makes them anxious that the presentation shall be as perfect as possible.

There is a committee to decide the distribution of the parts. For three successive

periods the principal part has been taken by one person,—Joseph Mayer. For the play of nineteen hundred, it was necessary to choose a new actor, as Mayer had become too old to take the part of a young man. We were told that there was not the slightest hesitation in assigning this part. It was given to young Anton Lang, now twenty-five years old. He is too young to have acted before in any important part. (The whole village is more or less on the stage, in the tableaux and the scenes which require a multitude of actors.)

Joseph Mayer now leads the "Chorus," which is arranged something as in Greek plays, so those who had never seen him in the principal part had an opportunity to look at him. He is tall, and thus fitted to be the central figure of the Chorus, and with a most dignified expression,—very serious and a little severe.

The severe expression may come from his being tormented with visitors. The only jarring element was the behavior of the foreigners. Some of these (many of them), as soon as they arrive, call at the houses of every one of the principal players, and ask for an autograph as signature to the photograph of the actor. These photographs are, of course, sold everywhere. The visitors must be an intolerable nuisance to the actors, and how they are endured I do not understand.

Undine and I did call upon the *Judas* family, because some friends of Undine's had boarded with them, and felt sure that they would be glad both to see us and to hear of their former visitors, which, indeed, proved to be the case. On our second visit to the Ober-Ammergau (for we went twice), we stayed at the house of "the Apostle John," and made his acquaintance in a pleasant, natural way. There was something very pleasing about him. Indeed, all the actors seemed to be singularly unspoiled, considering all the foolish people who visit them and the flattery which they receive. I happened to be in the shop of Peter Rendel (the Apostle John),—all the inhabitants are wood-carvers,—and a lady was pouring out complimentary remarks in rather a gushing way. He listened civilly, and answered with grave simplicity, "It pleased you?" I narrated this to Undine, who said with great interest: "Then he isn't spoiled! He isn't spoiled! I thought he didn't seem spoiled; but it was so incredible that he shouldn't be that I could hardly believe it."

I saw no sign of self-consciousness in any one of the players, only reverent, earnest simplicity. Joseph Mayer, I believe, shut himself up at last, and refused to see visitors; and I did not blame him at all.

We were quartered in a comfortable room on the ground floor of a rather new house, not very near the theatre, but at the upper end of the village; and our host was Dominicus Schilcher, a very pleasing and dignified old man and a member of the Chorus. All the inhabitants of the place have very good manners. I think our room was a parlor when the play is not in progress. It had a little bow-window and a handsome stove of green porcelain. Undine wondered why the name "Anton Lang" should be on this stove. There was a very simple explanation. Anton Lang—the "Christus" of the play—is a worker in porcelain and pottery of various kinds; and he had made the stove.

We spent Saturday afternoon strolling about the village, buying photographs and little wood carvings as mementoes and gifts. Above the village is a high rock, called the "Kofel." I do not know the origin of this name. On the rock is a cross or crucifix, visible from some distance. On a lower hill is a sculptured group, the figures life-size, representing not only the cross and the figure of Jesus, but the other figures beside the cross. This was given by the king, Ludwig II. of Bavaria, in 1871. The inscription is as follows: "To the art-loving Ober-Ammergauers, who are true to the customs of their fathers." This monument, every one visits.

The play is on Sunday. But, since such large numbers of visitors have come to see it, it has been necessary to hold a second performance on Monday, during the middle of summer. This seems very hard on the actors, but they carry it through with grave conscientiousness. At five in the morning, on Sunday, the village is filled with those who are on their way to church for the early service. Visitors may go, but the actors feel this preparation and self-consecration necessary.

Our next neighbors in our boarding-house were a pleasant French family,—father, mother, and daughter, the last a young

girl of about Undine's age, whom we had known in Garmisch, where we had just spent a fortnight. They intended to be at the early mass, and Undine was inspired with a desire to go with them. As her usual hour for rising is eight, sometimes nine, I had thought it might be difficult to get her up at six,— an essential part of the Ober-Ammergau programme. However, soon after five they were all on their way to the church; and I was left independent until the seven o'clock breakfast.

The play begins at eight o'clock, and occupies eight hours, with an interval of one hour for dinner, ending at five in the afternoon. Although the spectators have a roof over their heads, the whole front of the theatre is open, and they are practically out-of-doors. If it is cold weather,— and it generally is,— very warm clothing is needed. Again, no one ought to wear either hat or bonnet in the theatre; for the seats do not rise very much, and any head-covering is an inconvenience to those behind. There should be a regulation about this, but there is none. It is left to the conscience and the good or bad manners of the guests. I need hardly say that I left my bonnet at home; and to Undine, with her head-covering of thick hair, it was a matter of perfect indifference. But I expected to take a dreadful cold, and regretted not having brought a veil or lace handkerchief. There was the usual proportion of people who are perfectly indifferent to the rights of others, and one thing that did surprise us was the number of men who wore their hats. This was worse than the bonnets; for the men were taller, to begin with.

The stage is out-of-doors, so to speak. A large platform, and in the middle a central stage, with a curtain as if for tableaux. On each side of this, a street of Jerusalem, leading off to a vista of real hills and with real sky above them. On one side of the principal stage, the house of Pilate, on the other, the house of Caiaphas.

We prepared ourselves for the day by putting on our warmest wraps and carrying with us pillows from our beds to serve as cushions. Being covered with Turkey red, these were very suitable for cushions; and we had only to slip off the trimmed and decorated pillow-cases to make them quite unrecognizable as pillows. One friend of ours went so far as to carry the blankets from her bed. She had neglected to bring warm wraps, and found that the blankets, brown and red, answered the purpose very well.

We now waited in thrilling suspense for the beginning of the show. At eight exactly entered from each side of the stage the Chorus, about thirty men and women, attired in classical garments of all colors, many with flowing white robes, over which fell mantles of crimson, blue, purple, etc. They ranged themselves in a long row across the stage. And in the centre the tall, imposing figure of Joseph Mayer, the leader,— the "Christus" of many years.

The first words sung by the Chorus are: —

"Cast thyself down in adoring love,
Race bowed down by the curse of God!
Peace and grace out of Zion above!
He is not wroth forever,
Though his wrath be just, though uplifted his rod.
Thus saith Who changeth never: —
'I will not the death of a sinner. I will forgive.
Let him live!'
And he gave up his Son, the world from sin to free.
Praise and thanks we give,
Eternal, to Thee!"

Then the curtain opens and discloses the first tableau,— Adam and Eve flying from the Garden of Eden. They are dressed in white sheepskin, and in the background stand the tree and the angel with flaming sword.

A second tableau follows. This is the Adoration of the Cross. A cross in the centre, and groups around it.

After this the real action of the play begins. The first scene is the entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Either because it was the first, or because more in the scope of human power to present, this was as touching and thrilling to me as any part of the play. The stage is covered with multitudes of people, many of them children, almost all carrying palm-branches, and singing "Hosanna." The figure of the "Christus" is not seen at first. In the centre, where the curtain has been withdrawn, is the court of the Temple, and the money-changers with birds and cattle and tables. For several minutes the crowds pour down through the street by Pilate's house, all

with faces of reverent devotion, and looking back while they wave their palms. At last appears the figure of John, in a green robe and red mantle, leading the ass on which the "Christus" is seated. He dismounts and enters the Temple Court; and then follows the scene with the money-changers, where an interesting thing to me was that the writer of the play seems to have caught the idea, so often overlooked, that it was the exclusion of the Gentiles from the only place in the Temple to which they were admitted, not the desecration of the Temple, that aroused the indignation of Jesus.

Jesus is dressed in a robe of purple-gray with a crimson mantle. This and, indeed, all the costumes appear to be copied from old paintings by Roman Catholic artists. No human being could probably fully realize our ideal of Jesus Christ, and we can hardly satisfy ourselves with our own imagination; but all the scenes are like paintings by the best old masters, come to life. Indeed, it occurred to me that it might be interesting to see a representation without any speaking at all, only the figures in action.

In some of the scenes (the Last Supper, for instance) the actors fall into the attitudes of the figures in celebrated paintings. Judas was the only one who put much acting into his part. L. F. C.

The following notices came too late to be printed in the Book Club department.

The Marlboro Branch offer the following books. Address Miss Blanche A. Russell, 70 W. Main Street, Marlboro, Mass. Enclose a reference.

Educational.

Worcester's "Dictionary"; Patterson's "Speller"; "Progressive Speller"; "Arithmetic," Greenleaf; "Business Arithmetic," Fairbanks; "Elementary Arithmetic," Ray; also Fish; "Algebra," Bradbury; "Geometry," Bradbury; "United States Gazetteer"; "Geography," Harper's; "Physiology," Harper's; also Cutter's; "Elements of Physics"; "Geographical Reader"; First, Second, Third, and Fifth Readers of different authors; "Latin Reader," Harkness; "Lessons in English," Hyde; "School Composition," Swinton; "Lessons in English," Read and Kellogg; "English Composition," Parker; "Reading and Oratory," Mandeville; "Botany," Woods.

Miscellaneous.

"Pilgrim's Progress"; "Future Unfoldings," Wheeler; Poe's "Poems"; "An Island Princess," Theo. Gift; "Titus," Kingsley; "She," Rider Haggard; pamphlet set of Dickens's Works; "Scottish Lights," Wilson; "Robinson Crusoe"; "Sunshine" (Babyland); "Gracie Goodwin"; "Plain Tales from the Hills," Kipling.

Mrs. Hattie Lawrence's address is now Stuart, Patrick County, Virginia, instead of Verano, Virginia.

The address of Mr. J. H. Isbell, lately Cedar Valley, is now again Blackstone, Caldwell County, North Carolina.

LETTERS.

I have received many books and papers, which I am very thankful to get. But many came without names of the sender.

I only wish all knew the amount of pleasure I got out of the reading sent me, besides what others have received from the same.

This is one of the loneliest places in the world,— nothing but negroes for miles around, no church nor schools nearer than three and one-half miles.

My husband is an expert gardener, and is managing a large truck farm for a company. The floods of 1899 and 1900 completely ruined us. The big rise of the Brazos River in July, 1899, swept our crop away. We had two hundred acres in garden, and a hundred and twenty-five acres in potatoes. When the flood came, it swept the entire field, except three acres.

I do my own work, to save all I can; and we have taken care of the hands, and sometimes there are twenty-five men to feed.

Waco is only three and one-half miles away, and some very low people in it, and every fine night the men were over there; but, since we have been giving the books and papers, it looks as though a great change had taken place. We have put a table and lights into the "Hands'" department, and you can see all the men sitting round the table reading. Mrs. M. L. Stricklin,

Waco, Texas.

A friend often sends me your charming *Cheerful Letter*, which I acknowledge by sometimes sending a few English newspapers to your readers. To-day, in the solemn hush following the funeral of our revered queen, I tried to write three humble tributes to her dear memory; for my father was a naval officer, and had command of the guard-ships at Cowes, and, as a tiny girl of seven, proud was I to fasten his sword and best gold epaulettes when he went to dine with her Majesty.

During the past week three simple stories of that far-reaching influence have been published, and may interest your readers.

1. The peasants on the Riviera were so impressed by the fine weather which always accompanied the visits of the queen at Grasse, Cimiez or Nice, that they called her "La bonne reine Soleil" (The good queen Sunshine).

2. A little lad in Ireland, seeing "Death of the Queen" on a newspaper placard, spent his only penny in buying a bunch of violets to lay silently upon her name.

3. A little girl in London made a wreath of ivy leaves and snow-drops, but, not finding a statue of Victoria, laid it at the feet of a statue of Queen Anne.

ERNESTINE L. WILLIAMS,
Haslemere, Surrey, England.

I write to thank you for sending me the *Cheerful Letter*. As I am unable to go to church, the sermons supply, in a measure, church attendance. I also wish to thank all those who have sent me good novels. I have acknowledged all that had an address. As reading is the only pleasure left me, I should be pleased and grateful to still be remembered in that way. I have found two very pleasant correspondents through *The Cheerful Letter;* and they send me good books, and have remembered me in other ways many times. If affliction should ever come to you, dear friends, may you all be as kindly remembered.

MRS. EMMA F. CARNEY,
205 Hanover Street, Manchester,
New Hampshire.

The Cheerful Letter is such a pleasure to me that I feel I would like to express to you my appreciation of it. The beautiful poems, the sermons, the articles on nature, and the selections from best writers are a source of pleasure and inspiration to an invalid who suffers much, yet who enjoys to the utmost all pleasures that come her way. Yes, and the articles of travel from your pen are eagerly read. I hope you will tell about the beautiful pictures you saw in Paris, for there is nothing I love better than pictures.

I had hoped to have an article for the "Mother's Council" to send with this, but am not well enough to finish it.

MARGARET A. RICHARD,
1421 Lamkin Street, Columbia,
South Carolina.

To Mrs. George Brown and others: Your letters with requests for books could not be inserted, because sent to the Editor instead of the Book Club secretary.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

The editor would be glad to have space and time to tell her *Cheerful Letter* friends of all the interesting features of her recent journey to the South; but one or two pictures from that delightful panorama she must give.

The long-postponed pleasure of a visit to an old friend, who has given the last thirty-six years of her life to teaching a colored school in South Carolina.

Here, in the beautiful "Old Fort Plantation," I spent four days. Nothing can be more lovely than the situation. The old plantation lies on the shore of Beaufort River, really a broad arm of the sea. Across the blue water I looked every day from my window to St. Helena Island, and wished for time to make a visit there also; for there another friend had been living many years, devoting her life also to raising the colored people from their low condition to useful, self-respecting citizens.

Old Fort Plantation is the very place where Dr. Nehemiah Adams stayed, visiting the owner, and where he wrote a large part of his memorable "South-side View." This owner is said to have been "a very cruel man."

Until the floods of a few years since, the old live-oak tree was pointed out, under whose shadow Dr. Adams used to sit and write. Under the same tree Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was read to the assembled negroes. At this time

Colonel Higginson's Regiment was quartered at "Old Fort"; and in his Memoirs he tells of this wonderful moment, and how all the negroes, when the proclamation had been read, to the surprise of the white people present, burst out into the hymn, "My Country, 'tis of Thee." For the first time they had a country.

The day after I arrived was Saturday, a holiday in the school, and a beautiful day; and we spent an hour or two walking about over the plantation. The ruins of the old fort are quite perceptible. The house of the planter is burned down; and the beautiful old live-oak trees, draped in gray moss, are the principal feature of the place.

Miss Botume, my dear old friend, lives in the midst of a settlement of her pupils, of whom she has now seen a generation (almost two generations) grow up. We visited one dwelling where a daughter of the family was to be married the next week. Many of the pupils of the early days are now mothers, and one or two are grandmothers. It was pleasant to see how every face brightened when Miss Botume met them.

After I had left, came an invitation to me from Miss Towne on St. Helena to visit her school. I regret the more missing this opportunity, because only a day or two before I sat down to write this article came the news that this dear and noble woman has been called to higher work elsewhere. Wherever she is in God's universe, her heaven will be found in work and love, in giving herself for the good of others.

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of giving here a little article clipped by me from a Southern paper, in Florida, only about three weeks before Miss Towne's death:—

WHAT ONE WOMAN HAS DONE.

Nearly forty years ago, about the time of the close of the Civil War, a quiet, unassuming little lady, young and pretty, felt that the problem of the emancipated slave lay in some measure upon her shoulders. She had some money, social influence in her native State of Pennsylvania, and much plain, hard, common sense,—that most uncommon of all senses.

She came South, was sent to the Island of St. Helena, off the coast of South Carolina, and there opened a school for the freedmen. St. Helena had been divided into great cotton and rice plantations, and was peopled almost exclusively with negroes. These negroes were very low down in the scale of civilization. The whites on the island were too few to exercise any educational influence upon the huge mass of blacks, many of whom had but recently arrived from Africa; and it was a question, when Miss Towne went to St. Helena, whether the entire island would not revert to African fetishism, and a miniature San Domingo appear within our limits.

At first the Freedman's Bureau supported the school; but, when interest in the negro died out, that resource failed, and for years Miss Towne has supplied its needs from her own income and the assistance of her family and personal friends. Early in the work she bought an old plantation residence, associated with her an English friend, and there, in the midst of a mass of the densest ignorance and superstition, established what might justly be called the first "college settlement."

To-day the island has a population of six thousand negroes and forty whites. One constable and one justice of the peace represent law and government. Crimes are unknown, and lawlessness of any kind is rare; and this remarkable state of affairs is undoubtedly due to the influence of Miss Towne and the teachings of her school.

The school in a way does what Booker Washington is doing at Tuskegee. The negroes are taught, not only books, but how to live in a decent, self-respecting manner. They all have little farms; and they are shown how to cultivate them, how to make, and how to mend. They are shown how to utilize the common things that lie at their hands, encouraged to patch a leaking roof where a new one is not available, to make useful pieces of furniture from old boxes,—taught all, in fact, of the little matters that go to make the difference between the shiftless and the thrifty.

The negro question long ago ceased to be a problem to Miss Towne. She found the solution, and has ever since been applying it.

Such women as Miss Towne and Miss Botume are "the Saviors of to-day, in their own holy land."

While I was in Florida came the news of Queen Victoria's death. The whole civilized world mourns for her, and no wonder. It seems to us as if a far-reaching good influence had been withdrawn from the world.

The story that perhaps we all like best of her is how, when a little girl, she was shown that she stood in near succession to the throne; and, clasping her little hands, the child whispered, "I will be so good!" She has kept that promise.

The court had been anything but respectable under the two previous reigns. Victoria's influence has been felt, not only in her own court, but in all the courts of Europe, not only in her own dominions, but all over the civilized world. In the United States she has been as much loved and honored as in England. Those of us who remember the Civil War can never forget what we owe to her and to Prince Albert; for it was their wisdom and good feeling that kept us out of a war with England, when that would have ruined our cause. How many memories rise at her name! Was there ever a woman before (queen or private individual) whose death brought so real a sense of personal loss to the whole civilized world?

We have not the same opportunities for doing good that these women had of whom we have spoken,—so different in their sphere, so alike in their unselfishness and integrity. But the lesson of every noble life is to do, each one of us, all that we can, in our own way and according to our ability, to "make the world better."

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,— good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, April 5, at 10.30 A.M., at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. All interested in this work are cordially invited to be present.

Please notice that the address of the secretary has been changed from 2 *Gordon Terrace, Brookline, to* 373 *Boylston Street, Boston.*

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.